



NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTRE
POLAND



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TECHNOLOGIES

PhD position in Urban Evolutionary Ecology

A PhD position is available to work in the **Wild Urban Evolution and Ecology Lab** (www.leem.cent.uw.edu.pl) led by Marta Szulkin at the Centre of New Technologies (CeNT), University of Warsaw (Poland) for a period of **3 years starting on the 1st of October 2017**. CeNT (www.cent.uw.edu.pl) is a new research institute of the University of Warsaw. English is the working language of the group. The position is part of a 3-year OPUS grant from the Polish National Science Centre (NCN) entitled: *"Tit extra-pair mating in the Anthropocene: from life in a primeval forest to life in the city"*.

Background. Extra-pair paternity (EPP) in socially monogamous bird species is often viewed as the most important empirical discovery in avian mating systems. The underlying determinants of variation in promiscuity are indeed central to our understanding of mating systems and sexual selection. While great tits (*Parus major*) and blue tits (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) are small passerine birds that have been instrumental in formulating hypotheses addressing the different functional components of variation in EPP, understanding the causes of variation in promiscuity and resulting levels of EPP within and between populations remains a major challenge. One of the fundamental difficulties lies in the fact that all great tit and blue tit studies of promiscuity were carried out in nestboxes. These artificial breeding cavities are generally set-up in secondary forests with altered ecological processes relative to natural primeval forests. As a result, it is difficult to infer the extent to which currently reported EPP levels reflect natural variation in promiscuity and consequently address their functional meaning. This project will contrast promiscuity levels in blue tits and great tits from (1) a DNA dataset from natural cavities in a primeval forest – Białowieża National Park, (2) an urban forest where tit reproduction will be monitored in natural cavities, and from (3) nestboxes set in a gradient of urbanisation. As a result, we will aim to build a comprehensive understanding of variation in promiscuity in a gradient of man-made environmental modifications.

Job description. The PhD candidate will actively participate in fieldwork, collecting phenotypic, genetic and environmental data, sample preparation and lab work. S/he will be interacting with the PI, the postdoctoral fellow and all other members in the lab, collaborators in Poland and worldwide, and attend relevant workshops and conferences. It is expected that the candidate will learn a large ecological genetics skill set that will allow him/her to infer the behavioural and evolutionary ecology of urban blue tits and great tits.
Salary: monthly scholarship of 3000 PLN not subject to income tax, awarded for 3 years.

Job requirements. We seek motivated candidates with an MSc degree (obtained no later than the 15th of September 2017), a strong interest in evolutionary ecology and a good command of English. Desirable skills include experience in: ecological avian fieldwork, statistical analysis of biological data in R, population genetics and molecular lab work. Bird ringing experience and ethical permits to work with animals are a plus.

How to apply. Your application should include (in PDF format): a cover letter, C.V. (including, if applicable, your research experience, conference attendance, publication list, contact information for two referees, a copy of your Master's diploma and academic transcripts). Please contact Dr Joanna Sudyka (Joanna.sudyka@cent.uw.edu.pl) for informal inquiries. Please send your applications to marta.szulkin@cent.uw.edu.pl no later than the **20th of June 2017** with the term "PhD position" as email subject line. Selected candidates may be asked for reference letters; top candidates will be invited for interviews in person or via Skype.